

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 COME-00 EB-11

LAB-06 SIL-01 IO-14 OMB-01 DRC-01 /095 W

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R 071846Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6250

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, UK

SUBJECT: TUC PRESIDENT DISCUSSES LEFT-WING INFLUENCES

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ALF ALLEN, PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH TUC, DECLARED THAT CONTRARY TO SOME OPINION IN THE PRESS AND WITHIN LABOR PARTY CIRCLES, THE MODERATES IN THE BRITISH TUC ARE "STANDING UP TO BE COUNTED." ALLEN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE LEFT-WING INFLUENCE IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT HAD INCREASED BUT THAT "IN THE CRUNCH" THE MODERATES WOULD PREVAIL ON MAJOR ISSUES BEFORE THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT LEFT-WING INFLUENCE WITHIN KEY UNIONS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES HAD RESULTED IN A POLITICIZATION OF THESE CONFLICTS. END SUMMARY

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2. ALLEN GAVE HIS VIEWS DURING A LUNCHEON DISCUSSION WITH CANADIAN, GERMAN AND EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHES YESTERDAY (DECEMBER 6). HE APPEARED ANXIOUS TO DISPEL ASSERTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS IN THE BRITISH PRESS AND ECHOED IN THE COMMONS BY REGINALD PRENTICE, SHADOW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT, THAT TRADE UNION OR LABOR PARTY MODERATES ARE NOT STANDING UP TO BE COUNTED AGAINST THE MILITANT LEFT-WING.

3. ALLEN ARGUED THAT THE MODERATES ON THE BRITISH TUC GENERAL COUNCIL FAR OUTNUMBERED THE LEFT-WING (WHICH COMPRISED ONLY TWELVE OF THE 37-MAN GENERAL COUNCIL). HE INSISTED THAT THE MODERATES WERE, IN FACT, STRONGLY ASSERTING THEIR VIEWS DURING COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS, BUT THAT THIS WAS NEITHER ADMITTED NOR REPORTED BY THEIR CRITICS. THE TUC PRESIDENT ALSO DECLARED THAT THE PROBLEM STEMS FROM THE FACT THAT THE SELECTION COMMITTEE APPROVED BY THE TUC'S BLACKPOOL CONGRESS, WHICH HAS THE TASK OF SETTING UP OTHER VITAL TUC COMMITTEES, WAS ITSELF DOMINATED BY LEFT-WINGERS. THIS HAS RESULTED, HE ADDED, IN THE LOADING OF SUCH KEY TUC GROUPS AS THE INTERNATIONAL, FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES, AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEES WITH LEFT-WING ORIENTED MEMBERS. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE REPORTS OF THESE COMMITTEES ARE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE LEFT-WING MEMBERSHIP AND WHEN PRESENTED TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL BECOME VERY DIFFICULT TO SIDETRACK OR TO MODIFY. (ALLEN SAYS THAT THE REASON FOR THIS IS DUE TO SO-CALLED "BUGGINS TURN" LAW WHICH WORKS ON THE SENIORITY PRINCIPLE. HE VOWED THAT THE MODERATES WOULD REPEAL "BUGGINS LAW" AT THE NEXT CONGRESS IN BLACKPOOL.)

4. ALLEN IDENTIFIED THE KEY MODERATES AND LEFT-WINGERS ON THESE VITAL TUC COMMITTEES, ALTHOUGH HIS LIST WAS OBVIOUSLY INCOMPLETE. AMONG THE MODERATES, HE NAMED IN ADDITION TO HIMSELF, SIR SIDNEY GREENE, NATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYMEN; DAVID BASNETT, NATIONAL UNION OF GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS; SIR DAVID DAVIES, IRON AND STEEL TRADES CONFEDERATION; TOM JACKSON, UNION OF POST OFFICE WORKERS. (SURPRISINGLY, HE DESCRIBED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CYRIL PLANT (INLAND REVENUE STAFF FEDERATION) AS SOMETIMES VOTING WITH THE LEFT-WING BECAUSE OF "SPECIAL REASONS) AMONG THE LEFT-WINGERS, HE NAMED JACK JONES, TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION; HUGH SCANLON, AMALGAMATED UNION OF ENGINEERING WORKERS; DAN MCGARVEY, AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF BOILERMAKERS; R.W. BRIGINSHAW, NATIONAL SOCIETY OF OPERATIVE PRINTERS; MRS. C.M. PATTERSON, TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION; T.

PARRY, FIRE BRIGADES' UNION.

5. ALLEN INSISTED THAT THE MODERATES WILL "CARRY THE DAY" ON ANY REALLY VITAL "CRUNCH" ISSUE BEFORE THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL. HE PREDICTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE MODERATES WOULD REJECT A DEMAND BY JACK JONES THAT THE TUC CALL A SPECIAL CONGRESS IN THE NEW YEAR. HE SAID A SPECIAL CONGRESS WOULD SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT ALLOW JACK JONES TO TELL HIS EXECUTI-

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VE COMMITTEE HE TRIED AND FAILED AND THUS KEEP HIS LEFTIST IMAGE UNTARNISHED. SIMILARLY, ON "CRUNCH" ISSUES IN THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD, THE MODERATES, HE NOTED, "WOULD STAND UP AND BE COUNTED." IF FOR

EXAMPLE, THE GERMAN DGB CARRIED OUT A REPORTED THREAT TO LEAVE THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC) IF THERE IS A VOTE TO ACCEPT THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED FRENCH CGT AND THE ITALIAN CGIL, THE BRITISH TUC WOULD CERTAINLY "CHOOSE THE GERMANS OVER THE RUSSIANS," AS HE PUT IT. (PRESUMABLY, THE SAME REASONING SHOULD HOLD TRUE IN THE EVENT THE DGB THREATENED A WALKOUT OVER THE VENUE OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFERENCE).

6. ALLEN SAID THAT PENETRATION BY THE LEFT IS NOT ONLY AFFECTING THE VERY IMPORTANT COAL INDUSTRY DISPUTE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT WAS ALSO "POLITICIZING" THE CURRENT DISPUTE IN THE RAILWAY INDUSTRY. HE CHARGED THAT "FIVE OF THE NINE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF ASLEF (ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN - ONE OF THREE UNIONS INVOLVED) ARE COMMUNISTS." (JOHN ELLIOTT, IN THE FINANCIAL TIMES, DECEMBER 7, WRITES THAT THE LEFT IS CURRENTLY IN THE MINORITY ON THE ASLEF EXECUTIVE BUT THAT CHANGES EXPECTED NEXT MONTH "WILL SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE THE POWER OF THE LEFT.")

7. COMMENT: AN OPPORTUNITY TO TEST ALLEN'S ASSERTION ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE MODERATES WILL COME SOON. A MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL WILL TAKE PLACE LATER THIS MONTH WHEN IT IS EXPECTED THAT JONES WILL MOVE TO HOLD A SPECIAL TUC CONGRESS. IN THE MEANWHILE, THE GATHERING STORM OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES WILL INCREASINGLY FORCE THE MODERATES ON THE TUC'S GENERAL COUNCIL AND AMONG ITS AFFILIATED UNIONS TO "STAND UP AND BE COUNTED." (ALLEN'S COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.)

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